

A Child of Faery:

The Life of Blaise, Master of Merlin

MATTHEW GORDON MACNEIL



A Child of Faery: The Life of Blaise, Master of Merlin

By Matthew Gordon MacNeil

Notes:

Through my research, I've become convinced that much of the information presented as Merlin's early life and background were, in fact, actually based on his Master's life instead. Therefore I've used them to write this short biography.

As always, this reflects only my own personal views and opinions, nothing more or less.

The man who would become the teacher of the greatest Druid, and some say the greatest Mage, to ever live, was born in obscure circumstances, into a poor and undistinguished Welsh family.

Many legends speak of such men as Blaise being born into wealthy and influential Clans, of having Princely fathers or Queenly mothers, but he could make no such claim.

He was born the son of a simple village woman in the countryside near the Welsh town of Carmarthen. His family, as far as anyone can determine, were neither special in bloodline or in status, being farmers for all their known generations.

Blaise's mother was named Marinaia, which perhaps suggest Roman descent for the family given the name's Italian origin, who lived a quiet life with her father and mother on the farm with her younger brother Melias (another indicator of full or partial Roman descent as it is a Latin name).

Marinala, in herself, was unremarkable insofar as her life goes. She did nothing out of the ordinary for the time,

working the farm and spending her leisure hours with family and friends, much like people have been doing since we were created by the Gods.

However, in early 420 AD, during a time of anarchy across Britain as the country was without a King and various nobles fought one another for the throne and Saxon, Jute, Frisian, and Irish raiders struck the coasts, Marinala found herself in the forest close to her village.

Why she went there is unknown as she never said or, if she did, the records have not survived. But what is known is that, as she walked the forest paths enjoying nature, a beautiful man stepped out before her, his handsome features breathtaking.

He was, she soon realized, an Elf, and this forest was a gateway to the world of Faery, to Avalon, where Fairies and Elves lived side by side and occasionally cross into the human world.

Whether by Magic or just natural attraction and lust, Marinala found herself drawn to the man and soon they embraced, having sex there and then.

Prior to this Marinala had been a virgin and seemingly had no plans to marry anyone, so when she became pregnant and later began showing, it both shocked and outraged her

parents.

Her father, also named Melias, believed she had been a harlot, sleeping with the village men behind the backs of her family. Marinala of course denied such accusations but, quite understandably, did not admit to who the father was.

Things became so heated that the village priest, an elderly man named Blaise, intervened. He calmed Melias down, and through talking with Marinala like a rational person, not an anger filled mad man like her father had, he was able to extract from her the truth of how she became with child.

Blaise the priest, a believer in the world of Faery, unlike Marinala's parents who believed it was the work of the Devil, did not see it as a bad thing as he knew sometimes Fairies and Elves chose human men and women to bring children into the world for some great purpose.

But, to ease the fears of Melias and his wife the elderly priest agreed to baptize the child upon their birth, thus, according to traditional Catholic belief, expelling any evil spirits from the baby.

A few months later Marinala gave birth in her home to a healthy baby boy she named Blaise in honour of her friend, and just as he had promised, the child's namesake took the newborn to the church where he was baptized into the

Christian faith.

As he was baptizing the boy a Hawk, an animal associated with the world of Faery in the Druidic religion, flew above the family and let out a cry. Some believe this 'Hawk' was in fact the child's father checking on him by means of shapeshifting.

To atone for her 'sins', Marinala devoted the rest of her life to serving God, becoming a nun and was able to take Blaise with her to the convent in the city of Caerwent.

Here the boy grew up for the first ten years of his life, sheltered by his mother and the sisters at the convent from the warfare raging across the country.

The Lord of Caerwent was one Vitelius, a Briton of Roman descent and grandson of Magnus Maximus Pendragon. He was a crafty, shrewd man who was faring quite well in the civil wars, but he still wanted to be on the safe side and therefore set about building a new castle in case things should come to worst.

The castle, to be built close to a nearby lake, was designed by the best craftsmen in Wales, hired by Vitelius to make sure it was virtually impentriable.

However, even though things went smoothly during its construction, once it was complete a sudden earthquake brought the castle crashing down.

Losing his temper at the money he lost, Vitelius dismissed the first batch of craftsmen believing it was their incompetence which led to the castle's weakness, and quickly hired another crew.

Again the same thing happened. A smooth building period followed by a quick and destructive earthquake.

This time Vitelius didn't blame those who built the castle, instead he called together his council, among them a soothsayer, and asked them what he should do.

The soothsayer suggested he placate the Gods by offering up the blood of a young child born of no earthly father.

Vitelius, trusting the woman's words, sent his soldiers out to find such a child, caring neither their age or gender.

Soon enough, while searching Caerwent's streets they heard from the people that a nun lived at the convent who had a child but no one knew his father.

Taking a shot in the dark the soldiers went to the convent and took Marinala back to their Lord for questioning.

Vitelius proved thorough in his interrogation. He broke through her initial lies, and eventually got her to confess the boy's father's identity.

Once he had what he needed he sent for Blaise, the boy being

dragged in front of the Lord of Caerwent in ragged clothes.

The boy, perceptive and more aware than his years would imply, asked the Lord why he was brought before him.

Vitellius, rather callously, stated flat out his intentions to sacrifice him to the Gods to appease them so his castle could be built without trouble.

When Blaise asked why he believed such a thing was necessary Vitellius informed him of his soothsayer's announcement.

Blaise laughed, and questioned the Lord on why he'd believe something without first looking for alternative explanations. He demanded to see the soothsayer, and when she came before them both, Blaise called her a fraud.

"As you are ignorant,"

He said,

"Of what the true cause is underneath the foundations, you suggested my blood to act as a gift to the Gods when in reality it is no Gods doing this."

He looked to Vitellius then,

"Lord, dig up underneath the foundation and you shall see what is causing the castle to collapse time and time again."

Impressed by the young boy's manner and speech, Vitelius decided to humour him and ordered his men to dig up the foundation as Blaise instructed.

What they discovered shocked them all.

Underneath the dirt and mud was a den where a large, red scaled Dragon lived.

This Dragon, centuries old, had been living there for Gods know how long, and each time the castle was completed, it disturbed the dirt 'roof' and knocked debris down on him, which in turn caused the Dragon to shake and bring the castle down.

Vitelius, terrified at this discovery, quickly abandoned the site, never to bother with it again. What became of the Dragon thereafter is unknown.

The Soothsayer was executed for her fraud and news of Blaise's abilities spread far and wide over Britain, until they reached the Scottish Highlands.

Here a Druid named Gildas MacCarus lived among the animals and insects, the forest his home. Gildas, a son of a Roman named Carus, had been raised in the Druidic tradition from an early age by his maternal uncles and had been a young man in the days of Magnus Maximus Pendragon.

Learning of this Child of Faery Gildas left the Highlands and

traveled the long way to Wales, intent on making the boy his apprentice. Druidism, while not dead in Britain, was not as numerous as other beliefs such as Roman polytheism and Christianity, having suffered a decline ever since the slaughter of the Druidic academy on the Isle of Anglesey by the Romans in 68 AD during Boudicca's uprising.

Gildas, like all Druids, wished to pass on his knowledge and expertise to the next generation and to do this he needed an apprentice, something he hadn't, up until then, been able to find.

But in Blaise, a child with innate Magic and Elven blood, he knew he'd found the right person. Once in Caerwent it didn't take much convincing for Marinala to allow her boy to go with Gildas, the elderly man being known for his histories and spiritual teachings.

Saying goodbye to his mother Blaise returned to Scotland with Gildas where he remained for the next eight years.

It was under Gildas' tutelage where Blaise first learned the Magical arts, delving deep into the mysteries of the world and the one beyond, both the afterlife realms and the other dimensions such as Avalon and Alfheim (the world of the Light Elves).

His years under Gildas are sparsely documented, but what we

do know is Blaise learned the essentials of Magic, Druidic religion, and the teachings of Jesus as taught by Jesus's uncle Joseph of Arimathea, which had become part of Druidic knowledge even if the religion wasn't Christian.

Blaise's Elven blood made his connection to the Magical fabric of the universe more potent than an fully human Druid and it is thanks to this supernatural connection he was also able to attain the skill of prophecy quicker than most.

By eighteen he was ready to strike out on his own, Gildas having taught him everything he knew. Leaving the Scottish Highlands Blaise made his way back to Wales where he found work at the court of Rodarch, a Lord in the North of the Kingdom.

Civil war was still a factor of everyday life, even if it had died down since his childhood, and Blaise was able to settle into his job as Rodarch's Bard and Druid, becoming successful and renowned.

In Rodarch's Court Blaise met the Lord's younger sister, Cornelia, and the two were smitten almost from the outset.

They married in 439 and by 440 they had their first son. In all they had three children, all boys.

Blaise's life was one of contentment and happiness for many a year, even amid all the chaos in Britain he found ways to

enjoy life with his wife and children.

Years later, in 464, under the command of Constantine Pendragon, grandfather of King Arthur, Blaise went with Lord Rodarch into Scotland where a band of Saxons had fled.

Along with Blaise went his three sons, all eager for their first taste of real battle.

Close to the Scottish border the two sides clashed.

It was a long, brutal contest. The Saxons, all veterans of countless raids, did not give an inch once they realized they could not escape.

The ground was sleek with blood, countless men dying on the British side. Men such as Cedfyl, Cadfan, Maelgwn, Erith, Gwrith, Bran, Melgan, Rhys, Cynelyn, and Cyndur, all sons of the Lord Eliffer of York.

And in the midst of this carnage Blaise fought with his sons, using their spells to give additional strength to their warriors and take down Saxon fighters.

Ravens circled overhead, ready to feast on the flesh of the dead. Constantine, still inexperienced as King, fought bravely and urged his men on, proving himself an adept Commander and it is perhaps no great speculation to say these qualities of his passed down to his grandson.

As all seemed to be going well for the British, things turned horrific for Blaise almost in a blink of an eye. Saxons warriors managed to crowd around him and his sons, and before any spells could be cast blades found his boys, killing them.

Blaise watched his sons fall, saw the Saxon swords repeatedly stab them, and with every ounce of Magic he had left he blasted them to cinders.

Once the Saxons were dead the Druid fell to his knees, staring down at the bodies in disbelieving silence.

Eyewitnesses later remembered him crying out,

"How cruel is fate! To take from me my dearest and beloved sons! Oh death ever near, why take them and spare me? My sons, who moments ago were charging the enemy, joyful and full of youth, now feed the earth with their red blood."

As the battle continued around him Blaise mourned, tears running freely down his face, blood soon caking his hands as he held his boys to him, hoping against hope it was all mistake. That they weren't truly gone.

In the end the British won the day and slew all the Saxon raiders. Blaise, with the help of Rodarch and other Knights, carried his sons back home to Wales.

Here he and Cornelia buried them in the graveyard of a beautiful Chapel, grieving together for their loss. But Blaise,

tramutized by what he had witnessed, did not eat for a week, staying beside his sons' graves day and night, crying out to the Gods, begging them for answers.

His grief morphed into madness as the next week dawned, and it drove him from society. He ran into the forests, a place he felt most at ease, and slowly made his way back to Scotland where he took up residence at Hart Fell in the Southern Scottish Uplands.

Blaise lived in the wild for years, a hermit and recluse from people and society at large. His Magic did not wane however and he used it to attract and tame animals, particularly a Wolf who became his constant companion during this time.

In 470, five years after slipping into madness, Blaise was finally tracked down by Rodarch and his men in his forest home.

The Druid tried to hide from them, his clouded mind not recognizing who they were, but the Lord and his Knights surrounded him in a glade. They drove off his Wolf friend and took him into their custody.

For his own safety, they said, they bound him in chains least he escape, and brought him back to North Wales.

Cornelia, believing her husband long dead like her sons, was

given a horrible shock when Blaise came through the city gates, hair matted, clothes little more than patched rags on his skinny frame.

His beard, once neat and trimmed, was grey and long, wild as the forest he was taken from.

She ran to him, wanting to hold him, but Blaise jerked away, unnerved by her presence. He didn't recognize her either.

Many men there couldn't believe this. Cornelia, as Master Geoffrey of Monmouth, the great chronicler of Arthur and the British Kings, wrote, was one of the most beautiful women in all Britain at this time and they couldn't fathom any man who would decline her advances.

But Blaise did, wanting nothing to do with her. All he wanted, he said over and over, was to be set free and return to his home in Scotland. When it became clear Rodarch wouldn't allow it he tried breaking free of his chains, only to find they were made of Magic resistant iron.

He was trapped.

Taken to a top room in the eastern portion of Rodarch's castle Blaise was placed under the care of a seasoned Knight with orders not to let him out nor to speak with him.

The Druid, growing more desperate by the hour to return to nature, pleaded with the man outside his door to be merciful

and let him out. He begged and pleaded, trying to bribe him with gifts and Magical power, but the Knight did not budge, loyal to his Lord.

At last, when it was apparent no amount of bribery or promises of power could free him, Blaise resigned himself to this fate and sat against the wall in his room, ignoring any attempts by Rodarch to make conversation. Thus he stayed for two months.

Rodarch eventually grew tired of Blaise's silence and misery, realizing he was doing as much harm to the man as he was to himself by continuing this foolishness. The Lord ordered the chains to be broken and allowed Blaise to leave North Wales.

Excited and happy to finally be free the Druid rushed out of the city, used an elemental spell to call a large stag to him and mounted it, riding back towards Scotland in high spirits.

Here Blaise remained, his madness wearing off in time as he came to terms with his grief and allowed the memories of his sons to rest. He never forgot them but he made peace with the fact they were gone from this world and that, Gods willing, he'd see them again in the next.

In later years, as I related in my biography of Arthur Pendragon, Blaise was called upon by the Pendragon Kings to construct Stonehenge and train the young Merlin and his

sister Ganeida in Magic and Druidry, acting as both mentor and a father figure for them upon the death of their biological father Aurelius Pendragon.

As an elderly man Blaise begun a history of the Pendragon Dynasty, covering its foundation by Magnus Maximus Pendragon up until the reign of Arthur.

He managed to write about the Battle of Badon Hill and other early events in Arthur's reign, but in 518, at the age of ninety eight, Blaise passed away before he could finish this History. His passing was peaceful, Merlin by his side.

This History would be completed by Merlin and along with the works of Thomas of Toledo, Tantalides of Vercelli, and Sapient of Baghdad, all historians in the Court of Arthur's successor Constantine, would help inform Masters Geoffrey of Monmouth and Thomas Malory in their histories of King Arthur and the Arthurian Age.